

ESDNewsletter October 2018

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- **16th ESDN Workshop, “Communication of Sustainable Development and the SDGs: Strategies and Good Practices”, 19-20 November 2018, Berlin, Germany**
- **ESDN Annual Conference 2018, 1-2 October 2018, Vienna, Austria – “Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in the Age of the SDGs: What new approaches are required to be successful?” – Full documentation now online!**
- **European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2019, May 30th – June 5th**
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New ESDN Quarterly Report on “Cooperation between Stakeholders and Policymakers in the Implementation of the SDGs: Overview of activities and practices in Europe”

The topic of this European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Quarterly Report is cooperation between stakeholders and policymakers in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It provides an overview of cooperation mechanisms and practices in Europe and looks at the EU, the national level, and at stakeholder activities.

This topic is also related to the theme of the ESDN Conference 2018, which focused on stakeholder-policy cooperation in the age of the SDGs. The findings from the Annual Conference, which brought together 120 stakeholders and policymakers from 27 countries for 1.5 days of exchange and learning, can be found in the conclusions section of this Report.

However, before addressing cooperation between stakeholders and policymakers in the implementation of the SDGs and whether the SDGs have changed the nature of cooperation, a look into past experiences of cooperation between stakeholders and policymakers with respect to sustainable development is needed to form a basis of measure for how the SDGs have potentially changed this cooperation overall.

Chapter 1 of this Report, therefore, seeks to define what the ESDN sees as stakeholder-policy cooperation and does so by looking into how cooperation between stakeholders and policymakers was before the SDGs came into being. The chapter also looks into why the cooperation between stakeholders and policymakers is important, as well as the role that the key principles of participation play in any cooperative process. The chapter then concludes with the benefits and challenges of stakeholder participation and cooperation in the policy-making process.

After having established a background on stakeholder-policy cooperation and stakeholder participation in the policy-making process, Chapter 2 focuses on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how its implementation, along with the implementation of the 17 SDGs have potentially changed the way in which stakeholders and policymakers cooperate.

Chapter 3 further breaks down this concept to the European level in order to see how stakeholder-policy cooperation functions with respect to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The European Union institutions that will be looked into in more detail are the European Commission (EC) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

Similarly, Chapter 4 looks at the stakeholder-policy cooperation and participation at the European country level, which describes, in tables, the methods that countries are utilizing to engage stakeholders in the cooperative and participative processes required to make cooperation effective and allow for the best chances of success in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. 22 European countries, and their stakeholder-policy cooperation methods, are shared.

Chapter 5 then looks into stakeholder driven initiatives and actions regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. For the purpose of this Report, the

stakeholders included are those that had presented their organizations and their organization's work in implementing the SDGs at the ESDN Annual Conference. The input given by these stakeholder organizations at the Annual Conference were important for interactive sessions that lead to the results discussed in the conclusions section of this Report.

16th ESDN Workshop, "Communication of Sustainable Development and the SDGs: Strategies and Good Practices", 19-20 November 2018, Berlin, Germany

The 16th ESDN Workshop that will take place in Berlin, Germany from 19-20 November 2018! The topic of this year's Workshop will be: "Communication of Sustainable Development and the SDGs: Strategies and Good Practices". The workshop, which is organized over two half-day sessions, which will run from 13:00 on 19 November until 13:00 on 20 November 2018, is hosted by the ESDN in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

The ESDN recognizes that the role of communication in the implementation of sustainable development, in general, and the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, in particular, is very important. Sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda need to be embraced not only by policymakers and experts in the field, but also by all the different stakeholder groups, in order to achieve their objectives in practice. However, the 17 SDGs and their specific targets are still mostly known by only relatively small groups of people. Therefore, the main objective of this workshop is to look into the needs for successfully communicating SD and the SDGs by highlighting good practice examples of communication strategies and reflect upon future needs of being able to better communicate SD and the SDGs. This will include a reflection on the recommendations of the peer review of the German SD Strategy and the new strategy to communicate sustainable development in Germany. For more information, please visit the [ESDN website](#) or send an email to the ESDN Office at esdn-office@sd-network.eu.

ESDN Annual Conference 2018, 1-2 October 2018, Vienna, Austria – "Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in the Age of the SDGs: What new approaches are required to be successful?" – Full documentation now online!

The ESDN Annual Conference 2018 was organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism. The conference was a 1.5-day event (1 October is a full day and 2 October is a half-day) and organized as an official event of the current Austrian EU Presidency. The Conference brought together 120 policymakers and experts from different stakeholder groups from 27 countries.

The SDGs are broad and complex, which necessitates the cooperation with, and knowledge from, all stakeholders. Given the broad and complex nature of the SDGs, have they changed the way in which the policy world and stakeholder world collaborate? If so, then what is now required to develop successful stakeholder-policy cooperation regarding the implementation of the SDGs? This conference therefore looked into new ways, approaches, and examples of how the policy world and stakeholder world collaborate by looking at the practical implementation of diverse stakeholder-policymaker collaboration methods, activities, etc. Cutting-edge examples were presented from many European countries, in which speakers shared the new ways and approaches they are employing stakeholder-policy cooperation

methods. In addition, the participants discussed and reflected upon stakeholder-policy cooperation experiences and needs in various exchange activities throughout the conference.

A full documentation of the ESDN Conference 2018 is now online at the [ESDN website](#) and includes the final Agenda, the Conference Discussion Paper and Proceedings, the slides of keynote presentations, and a photo documentation.

European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2019, May 30th – June 5th

The ESDW will be organized for the fifth time this year! The ESDW 2019 will take place from May 30th to June 5th 2019. The launch of the ESDW website for event registrations will be in early 2019! Everyone is encouraged to develop and register events that pertain to the SDGs! More information will follow soon! In the meantime, please visit the ESDW website at <https://www.esdw.eu/> to browse activities that took place this year or access the archive for activities from the previous years.

News on the governance of sustainable development from various European countries and the EU:

Austria: International Growth in Transition Conference, “Europe’s Transformation: Where People Matter”, 14-15 November 2018 in Vienna

This year, the Initiative Growth in Transition is organising its fourth international conference, entitled “Europe’s Transformation: Where People Matter”, on 14 – 15 November 2018 at the Austria Center Vienna. During the two-day event, plenary and parallel sessions will feature inspiring speakers from politics, science, civil-society and the private sector. Participatory conference formats will enable a dialogue between relevant stakeholders. The conference will address the transformation towards a sustainable society from very different perspectives. Conference topics will range from social and distributional aspects of a fair society to the role of the financial sector enabling a sustainability transformation. In order to sustain and increase prosperity and quality of life in the long term, we will need economic strategies which use the planet’s resources responsibly. A special focus will be put on the sustainable management of natural resources use and the mitigation of climate change. What measures need to be taken to achieve decarbonisation and a low-carbon society on the National and European level? In view of the challenge of a sustainable transformation of society, the role of the media will be examined. How can we create an encouraging vision of the future? The digital revolution has already transformed the world we live in. The question raised at the conference will be whether there is a chance of shaping a sustainable digital economy. Here is a list of confirmed speakers: Ban Ki Moon | Christoph Badelt | Hans Bruyninckx | Willibald Cernko | Emma Dewberry | Brenda King | Elisabeth Köstinger | Michaela Moser | Marcel Haraszti | Tim Jackson | Kate Raworth | Frans Timmermans | Stientje van Veldhoven. With Austria holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of the year 2018, the conference will reach out to an international audience. More information on the conference programme and registration process can be found the [Growth in Transition website](#).

Czech Republic: SD Unit now based in the Ministry of Environment, current and planned activities in the 2030 Agenda implementation, and news on SD indicators

After the transition of the sustainable development agenda from the Office of the Government in April 2018, the SD Unit is now based at the Ministry of Environment. The head of the Government Council on SD now is the Minister of the Environment and the Deputy-Prime Minister instead of the Prime Minister. The unit established itself in this new institutional structure and will continue to achieving a functional trans-departmental cooperation with other Ministries.

In August 2018, the SD Unit finished the preparation process for the 'Implementation Plan of the Strategical Framework "Czech Republic 2030"' and the final version of the Implementation Plan has been then approved by the Government Council on SD in September 2018. In October 2018, it will be submitted to the government. The Implementation Plan contains (obligatory) measures and (voluntary) recommendations for each of the 97 specific SD goals from the "Czech Republic 2030". The measures and recommendations will be executed by responsible government ministries. Each ministry will establish a focal point that will stay in touch with the SD Unit. The focal points' role is to inform the MoE as the main coordinator about achievements and obstacles in achieving the goals. In addition, the Voluntary Commitments Platform was prepared in order to improve the cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders and to find support SDGs fulfilling with their action. Through this platform, the MoE wants to engage more with the business sector, establish clear communication channels and achieve better cooperation in SD. The Ministry of Environment also became a member of the Association of the Corporate Responsibility.

The relevance and availability of the Agenda 2030 indicators is continuously assessed by the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO). Until now, 164 indicators have been assessed, 19 of them are not available and 9 were considered as not relevant for the Czech Republic. In the next months, it is planned to establish a new indicator set that will be related to Quality of Life and will serve as input for the Sustainability and Quality of Life Reports which will be issued for the first time in 2020 to assess and evaluate "Czech Republic 2030". At the moment, there are discussions within the Czech Statistical Office about the use and the scale of the new set of indicators as well as about the institution responsible for collecting the data for this set.

Finland: Website on Society's Commitments 2050 renewed

The website on Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development in Finland has been recently renewed: <https://www.sitoumus2050.fi/en>. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development is a key instrument for implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development is a shared long-term vision of the Finland we want to have in the future. The Commitment is founded on a common understanding of the compelling need for change. Society's Commitment includes mutually agreed-upon objectives and practices that are required to secure a good life now and for the future generations. Society's Commitment is the interpretation of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development on what sustainable development means. The practical measures will, in turn, define the contents of sustainable development. In order to

reach the objectives detailed in Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, operational commitments will be established with societal operators, such as companies, municipalities, organisations, administration, educational institutions, and local actors. Private individuals can also make operational commitments. Besides basic information on the Society's Commitments, the website provides information on individual commitments, statistics and reports of results achieved, etc.

Germany: Steering global sustainability away from a dead end – Recommendations by the German Council for Sustainable Development to the German Federal Government for Enhancing Multilateralism for the 2030 Agenda

In August 2018, the German Council for Sustainable Development issued a recommendation which addresses the multilateral dimension of the 2030 Agenda and proposes for UN Member States to guarantee a substantial and ambitious preparation of the UN Sustainability Summit in 2019. Although the recommendations are mainly directed towards the German Federal Government, the issue is, of course, of global importance and the recommendations could inspire many countries. The 9 recommendations put forward by the German Council are: introduction of a national HLPF conference; introducing stakeholder-based peer reviews as an instrument and strengthening stakeholder rights; interdisciplinarity and coherence within UN procedures; elevating multilateral cooperation; mobilisation of domestic funds in developing countries; enhancing the HLPF through impact leadership initiatives; the “makers panel” – the momentum of managing change, 2018–2020; the 2030 Agenda as a European project that has an impact all the way to Africa; the role of science-based intervention.

Malta: Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050

Malta's Sustainable Development Policy is re-orientating itself to align with the 2030 Agenda to better address the challenges and opportunities ahead. With the main aim to formulate a clear direction for the long-term maximisation of the three pillars of sustainable development of the Maltese Islands, they have designed a Vision that defines their strategic focus whilst at the same time outlines the picture of what it aspired for Malta on a long-term concept. Throughout 2018, the Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change has drafted a sustainable development vision document which was launched for public consultation in September 2018. Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 sets out the country's aspirations and priorities for mainstreaming sustainable development up till the year 2050. Sustainable Development is seen as not a stand-alone discipline but one that requires all ministries to tailor their actions along the principles of Sustainable Development and in line with achieving the targets set out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 is set to become the country's main guiding principle for developing policies, and when planning and implementing projects. This Vision has been structured and designed on the following key normative governance principles for steering sustainable development: enhancing economic growth, safeguarding the environment, and social cohesion and wellbeing. The next steps which will be taken to make our Vision for 2050 a reality include a new Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan which will be designed to meet the needs of the country and at the same time does not compromise on the future generations.

European Commission/Eurostat: 2018 communication package on EU SDG monitoring

On 18 September 2018, Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, issued the 2018 edition of the publication ["Sustainable development in the European Union — Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context"](#). It provides a statistical overview of progress towards the SDGs in the EU.

Apart from the monitoring report, Eurostat has released a range of complementary materials:

- for a quick overview: a short [brochure](#) providing a visual summary of the of the monitoring report's main findings,
- to play with: interactive visualisation tools for some of the 100 EU SDG indicators. A completely new and innovative [digital publication "SDGs & me"](#) helps the reader focus on issues that are of interest to them and compare their country with others,
- to focus on individual goals: [interactive presentation of indicators](#) and the series of [Statistics Explained articles](#),

The whole communication package is available under one roof: [Eurostat website section](#) on Sustainable Development Goals.

ESDN Country Profile information and updates

Please regularly check the [Country Profiles](#) on the ESDN homepage for information on national SD strategy and policy activities and regular updates!

Other news:

UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2019, 21-22 March 2019 in Geneva

The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region will be held on 21-22 March 2019, at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG). The Regional Forum will be aligned with the theme of the 2019 High-level Political Forum: "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in focus are: SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

Special Issue on "Evaluating SDGs - Measuring and Managing Projects, Programs and Policies" in Sustainability journal

A new Special Issue on "Evaluating SDGs - Measuring and Managing Projects, Programs and Policies" is currently prepared by researchers from Austria (Institute for Managing Sustainability at the Vienna University of Business and Economics), Germany (Center for Evaluation, Saarland University) and the UK (Judge Business School, University of Cambridge) with the journal Sustainability with a manuscript submission deadline on 31 March 2019.

In 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed Agenda 2030, including globally valid sustainable Development Goals. Monitoring and evaluation are explicitly mentioned as key success factors for achieving the SDGs. However, these efforts have to deal with a high

level of complexity, potential trade-offs, interconnectedness and systemic effects, as well as different perspectives and interests of various actors. While the present discussions mainly focus on indicators, evaluation is only rarely addressed—although some debates are taking place in different, but only loosely linked, scientific communities. Bringing together these different discussions is the goal of this Special Issue. This effort is especially necessary in times, when evidencebased policy making is disregarded and false claims of fakescience undermine the credibility of sound scientific methods. A resilient society needs reliable and supportive evaluations of interventions implemented for reaching commonly shared goals on different levels (policies, programmes, projects etc.). Therefore, a critical reflection on the institutionalization of evaluating SDGs in the public and the private sector may provide new insights on how to improve both quality and impact of such kind of tools, methods, and scientific approaches.

Researches and practitioners are encouraged to

- a) Provide sound background information on the respective project, programme or policy, its governance system and the way monitoring and evaluation of SDGs is implemented
- b) Elaborate in-depth on the evaluation approach and link it to the current scientific debate as well as to sustainability
- c) Present evidence on experiences, challenges and lessons learned (and are therefore neither concepts not pure theoretical contributions) regarding the evaluation approach and/or the implementation of SDG evaluation
- d) Critically reflect and discuss the transferability and generalizability of the specific case
- e) Highlight the contributions to the scientific debate as well as to the practice of implementing the SDGs

Please find more information on the Special Issue [here](#).

Evaluation of the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation around the world: EVALSDGs Country Spotlights

EVALSDGs is a network formed to add value and learning to SDGs, as well as support processes to integrate evaluation into national and global SDG review systems. The network is made up of experienced policymakers, institutions and practitioners with a share interest in evaluation and sustainable development. EVALSDGs advocates for the use of “Spotlight” as a tool to build and reinforce the national evaluation capacities of countries and contribute to empowering various partners in exchanging and sharing learnings and experiences accumulated and generated through the evaluation processes associated with the SDGs. This is part of the efforts to evaluate and review the implementation of the Global Development Agenda 2030. They have been releasing, since 2017, country spotlights on 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation which currently comprises information on 17 countries from all over the world. Here is the link to the country spotlights: <https://evalsdgs.org/portfolio/country-spotlights/>.